

**Welcome to worship**

We still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us. We light a candle – we remember that Christ is the Light of the world.

**Call to Worship:**

We are witnesses,

**to the love God has poured into us.**

We are witnesses of God's love,

**sharing it with each person we meet.**

We are witnesses to everyone we encounter,  
**little children like us, sisters and brothers in God's family.**

**Hymn: StF 297 Christ is alive**

[Christ Is Alive \(11am, 720p, webstream\) - YouTube](#)

- 1 Christ is alive ! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.
- 2 Christ is alive ! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.
- 3 Not throned afar, remotely high,  
untouched, unmoved, by human pains,  
but daily in the midst of life,  
our Saviour in the Godhead reigns.
- 4 In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.
- 5 Christ is alive and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

**Prayers**

When it seems that no one will listen,  
We find you at our side,  
Leaning over to catch every  
Faltering, stumbling, fearful word  
Spilling forth from our hearts.

When it seems that the world rushes past us, leaving us behind,  
We find you waiting just ahead of us,  
Ready to light the way  
Into the future you have prepared.

When we worry about yesterday  
And all the tomorrows to come,  
You gather us up in your arms,  
Gently rocking us in your hope.

God in community, Holy in One,  
Continue to touch us with your peace. Amen

**Prayer of forgiveness**

Good shepherd, we find ourselves running down the street after lies, rather than walking with you.

We find it easy to love other people, as long as they don't annoy or bother us.

We hunger for love and search for affirmation, yet find it difficult to let others love us for who we are.

Forgive us, Compassionate Heart.

You listen to the whispers of our hearts, and the sign of the promises of hope.

You grace us with peace, so our hearts can rest in you.

You continue to transform us into Easter people,  
brothers and sisters of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*Stillness is kept*

**Assurance of Pardon**

Not everything has been revealed to us, but this we do know: as God's children, we are blessed, we are loved, we are forgiven.

Our lives have been transformed by the abundant mercy given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Reading 1 John 3 : 16 – 24**

<sup>16</sup> This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

<sup>19</sup> This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: <sup>20</sup> If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him

anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup> And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup> The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

### Hymn: 709 Of all the Spirit's gifts to me

[CCS 45 Of All the Spirit's Gifts to Me - YouTube](#)

- 1 Of all the Spirit's gifts to me,  
I pray that I may never cease  
to take and treasure most these three :  
love, joy, and peace, love, joy and peace.
- 2 The Spirit shows me love's the root  
of every gift sent from above,  
of every flower, of every fruit,  
that God is love, that God is love.
- 3 The Spirit shows if I possess  
a love no evil can destroy,  
however great is my distress,  
then this is joy, then this is joy.
- 4 Though what's ahead is mystery,  
and life itself is ours on lease,  
each day the Spirit says to me :  
'Go forth in peace !', 'Go forth in peace !'
- 5 We go in peace — but made aware  
that, in a needy world like this,  
our clearest purpose is to share  
love, joy, and peace, love, joy, and peace.

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

### Gospel Reading John 10 : 11 – 18

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

### Reflection

A huge amount of our lives is taken up with work, be it paid work or voluntary. Hence, the way we regard our work is of the greatest importance. If our work has meaning, it becomes a blessing. But if it has no meaning, or little meaning, it becomes almost a curse.

It has been said that the first of our problems is to find the work we are meant to do in this world. Vincent Van Gogh spent many years trying to find out what he wanted to do with his life. Finally, after much searching, he discovered that he wanted to be a painter. From that day on his life changed. It wasn't that it suddenly became easy, the opposite would be nearer the truth, it was just that whereas up to this point his life was going nowhere, now it was going somewhere definite.

What's the difference between the good shepherd and the hireling? It is the contrasting attitudes they bring to the work of shepherding. The hireling does it because he has to, for him it is just a job, and his heart is not in it. The good shepherd does it because he wants to, and his heart is in it.

People like the good shepherd are very blessed people, they have found a real treasure. They haven't just found work; they have found a vocation in life. They have an occupation into which they can put their hearts, and which affords an outlet for the talents that are in them.

Even though their work may be difficult and unspectacular, it glows with meaning because it is a labour of love. Even though their life may contain difficulties and hardships, deep down they are contented. We must never evaluate a happy life with an easy life. The harder the task to which we give ourselves for love's sake, the more it will exalt us.

Jesus found his work. It consisted of being the good shepherd to the Father's flock. He cares about his sheep to the point that he is willing to die to defend them, he did this voluntarily. But more than that, he knows his sheep and they know him. He knows us and we know him. Good leaders know their own.

We are not sheep, but we are children of God and God wants us to have life to the full. This is the wonderful love God has shown for us by making us his children.

Of all the images we have of Jesus, one of the loveliest is that of the Good Shepherd. It was Jesus himself

who used it. How well do we trust and how closely do we follow the Good Shepherd?

**Hymn StF 503 Love divine** [Love Divine All Loves Excelling - live with lyrics - 1080p - YouTube](#)

- 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art ;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.
- 2 Come, almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive ;  
suddenly return, and never,  
never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.
- 3 Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be ;  
let us see thy great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee :  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise !

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

### Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray.

Risen Christ,  
Your living presence is celebrated  
at city gates and market squares,  
by those in need of healing and those who are  
amazed, in heart and minds.

In moments of wonder and unexpected changes,  
our senses are disrupted by the extraordinary,  
so that suddenly we see You  
standing in our midst  
speaking words of peace  
and inspiring Your world to discover the possibility  
of the kingdom of heaven  
in the ordinary of the world.

In the resurrection we bring our prayers to you.

As we join together with worshipping Christians all  
over your world, help us to enjoy our moments of  
wonder.

In a world where explanation and logic could chip  
away at faith,

may we marvel at the growing knowledge of science,  
and the wonder it creates.

From starlit skies,  
to molecules and atoms,  
giving intimate knowledge of a creation so full of  
opportunities to delve into discovering more of God.  
Thrill us with the mystery of what we are yet to know  
so that it expands our desire to notice You in  
unexpected ways and places and that we might care  
for the world we live in.

We pray for the breaking down of suspicion, double  
standards and hypocrisy in our world;  
that the nations may work together to conquer the  
problems food and water distribution,  
so that our planets resources are shared and not  
wasted.

King of glory  
**reign in our hearts**

In this journey through a pandemic,  
we give thanks for all those who have offered signs of  
resurrection in their work and commitments.  
We pray for doctors, nurses and support staff  
who tirelessly care for those who enter their view,  
at times with potential harm to themselves.  
We pray for the scientific community  
as it continues research and development  
in care and prevention.

We pray for the staff at the Martins and all of the  
residents.

We pray for those who are the recipients of care,  
and notice the wide range of people  
whose health has been affected  
by being unable to receive treatment and support.

King of glory  
**reign in our hearts**

Help us to recognise that while the virus has world-  
wide impact,  
we are not equal in immunisation programmes.  
Help us to notice those communities  
who will be the last to receive the support they need  
and to work towards the fairer share of wealth and  
resource,  
so that Your risen Presence reveals the kingdom in  
every land.

King of glory  
**reign in our hearts**

We pray for homes and families represented around  
our circuit with all their particular joys and sorrows,  
needs and resources .....

In the stillness we bring our prayers to you .....

Christ of life and death and resurrection,  
we celebrate those who have shared this life with us,  
allowing us to meet you in simple words and actions.  
We grieve with those  
who mourn the death of loved ones.  
May we be those who share the memories and love  
that allows hope to rise from loss.

King of glory  
**reign in our hearts**

Heavenly Father, give us such love  
that Your sheep, both inside and outside the fold,  
may be found,  
given health, strength, food  
and the ability to enjoy life to the full  
and the joy to praise You.  
We thank You that Jesus is the Good Shepherd  
and for Your grace and mercy  
that has made us part of His flock.  
Thank you that You watch over Your flock  
You know us by name,  
You understand what we are like,  
You call us to follow  
and You accompany us along the path,  
seeking us out when we stray,  
keeping a loving eye on what we do.  
Lead us into Your future  
on the adventure of faith,  
for Jesus' sake.

**Amen**

We say together **Our Father...**

### **Blessing of our Gifts**

Gracious God,  
You owe us nothing  
and yet in the risen Christ you give us so much.  
We owe you everything,  
yet we give you so little.  
We offer to you not simply our money  
but our talents,  
our love,  
and our service,  
each offered to you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our risen Lord.  
Amen.

**Hymn: StF 364 O for a thousand**

["O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" - YouTube](#)

- 1 O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace !

- 2 Jesus — the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease ;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life, and health, and peace.
- 3 See all your sins on Jesus laid :  
the Lamb of God was slain ;  
his soul was once an offering made  
for every soul of man.
- 4 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free ;  
his blood can make the foulest clean,  
his blood availed for me.
- 5 He speaks ; and, listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive ;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice ;  
the humble poor believe.
- 6 Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb;  
you loosened tongues employ  
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,  
And leap, ye lame, for joy.
- 7 My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of your name.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

### **A prayer of dismissal**

See how much God loves us:  
we have hope in Christ  
that frees us,  
heals us,  
reshapes us.  
Go in and into that good news:  
we are God's children.

**THE GRACE** We say together...

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all ever more.  
Amen.**

Some material included in this service adapted from

- Where the broken gather by Thom M Shuman
- Starters for Sunday – Church of Scotland

CCLI:7749.

